

# Don't Give Up

by Sandeep Poonen

---

*This sermon from Hebrews chapters 3 and 4 is titled 'Don't Give Up.' It emphasizes the importance of faith and obedience in entering God's rest, using the Israelites as an example of provoking God through disobedience. The message encourages believers to endure the refining process of God's Word, allowing it to penetrate deep into their hearts to cleanse and transform them, just as Jesus faced and overcame temptations. The sermon concludes with a call to run to the throne of grace, holding fast to the confession of faith in Jesus.*

**Scripture:** Hebrews 4:1, Hebrews 4:12, Hebrews 4:14, Hebrews 4:16, Numbers 14:24, Matthew 11:6, Galatians 2:11, 2 Peter 3:15, Isaiah 1:18

**Topics:** "Faith", "Perseverance"

---

## Description

This sermon from Hebrews chapters 3 and 4 is titled 'Don't Give Up.' It emphasizes the importance of faith and obedience in entering God's rest, using the Israelites as an example of provoking God through disobedience. The message encourages believers to endure the refining process of God's Word, allowing it to penetrate deep into their hearts to cleanse and transform them, just as Jesus faced and overcame temptations. The sermon concludes with a call to run to the throne of grace, holding fast to the confession of faith in Jesus.

---

## Transcript

Family, it's good to be here. I wanted to speak from Hebrews chapter 3 and 4. I want to, if I were to give a title to the sermon, it would be Don't Give Up. Do you feel like giving up? Do you feel like throwing in the towel? I hope this will encourage you.

Hebrews chapter 4, verse 1 onwards, it says, Let us fear lest while a promise remains of entering His rest, any of you should seem to have come short of it. For indeed, we have had good news preached to us, just as they also, we're talking about the Israelites, that's who they is, but the word they heard did not profit them because it was not united by faith in those who heard it. For we who have believed enter that rest, just as He said, As I swore in my wrath, they shall not enter my rest.

God was angry at these Israelites, it says, that they provoked Him. God was so angry at the Israelites for not obeying. And God says in verse 2, verse 1, Let us fear lest we too fall short of entering in that rest.

And the reason why we won't enter in that rest is because what we hear, it's not that we're hearing the wrong things, but what we hear are the right things, are not united with faith in those who hear it. Let's just

take a moment and also remember who he's talking about as a reference point. He's talking about the Israelites.

The Israelites provoked God to wrath because they didn't believe God. And God said in Numbers chapter 14, that 10 times they didn't obey me. Let me just tell you one of the times that they didn't obey God, was in Exodus chapter 15, you don't have to turn here.

Exodus chapter 15, right after they crossed the Red Sea, they came to a wilderness and they went three days without water. What would you do if you went three days without water? What if the church, we decide to go on a hiking trip for a week? Just picture this, put yourself in that situation. Imagine all of us organized to go on a church hike for a week.

And after we set out and the car took us perfectly to the beginning of the trail, walking through the Red Sea, we find out that nobody packed any water for a week-long hike. When will you start complaining? When will a spirit of complaining, because it wasn't your responsibility to pack for the water, it was the organizer's. One hour? Five hours? Think about this, you're walking in a wilderness of heat.

Twelve hours, no complaining, without the Holy Spirit. The Israelites didn't have the Holy Spirit in them. We apparently have the Holy Spirit in us.

And then our children start to complain. And our children start to cry, because it's been 36 hours and no water. And I tell you, we can have a strength in and of ourselves to hold strong, but when our children start to suffer, that's another level.

And then we can start looking at the organizers and start thinking, what's wrong with these people? Couldn't they have planned a week-long hike? And the one thing you've got to think on a week-long hike is water? You didn't even plan for that? These guys, the Israelites, went three days, no water, and they started complaining. I dare any one of us who didn't know the story to go three days without complaining. But this is what the Israelites did.

And what God said was, you provoked me. You provoked me to anger, because you started complaining. Now in the situations in our life, three days, look at your children crying, look at your children weeping for no fault of your own, because of the leader's fault, Moses didn't pack water.

God sent them away from Egypt. Wouldn't we complain? As our children are starting to go three days without water, I mean, they may be close to dying. They provoked God.

And so let's not think that the Israelites were some horrible people. They're no different from us. But God was, it says in 1 Corinthians 10 and here too, they are for our example.

Let us hate the spirit of complaining so much. And let us seek to enter into rest. And know that this rest is promised, but we will not get the rest by hearing it.

It has to be coupled by faith. That's what it said in verse 2. It didn't profit them. They heard God's word.

They saw the Red Sea, but they didn't, after all the hearing, get faith. And we see what faith is very clearly, because it's connected. It says very clearly in this chapter, Hebrews chapter 4, verse 6. It remains the rest for some to enter it because those who formerly had good news preached to them failed to enter because of disobedience.

So here now it's very clear to me what rest is and what this faith is. That must accompany me means obedience. We must run the way of our commandments.

We must obey. And verse 10 and 11, read this. For the one who has entered his rest has himself also rested from his works.

I believe it's talking not only about us, but about Jesus. He entered into God's rest completely. For 33 years, he came onto this earth and he was tempted in all points, as we heard from the memory verse of the children.

Tempted in all points. Will you not get into rest? Will you not get into rest? Will you start grumbling? Will you start complaining? And he entered into rest after completing every single temptation that was common to man. And he has rested now himself.

Now we have to enter into his rest. The rest that Jesus obtained. Just as God did after working for six days and creating the earth, and he rested from his tomb.

Verse 11. And let us therefore be diligent to enter into that rest, lest anyone fall through following the same example of disobedience. God's saying it's not good enough that you enter past the Red Sea.

It's not good enough that you went through these three days and didn't complain out of the water. There was test after test after test, at least for two years. And then they found the giants and they kept failing it.

And God was saying, let us be diligent to keep on obeying. Lest anyone fall into the same example of disobedience. And here's how the Lord spoke to me through this passage.

Because I just kept reading. Because, that's what verse 12 says. Don't fall into this passage of disobedience because, that's what four is.

Because the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword. To pierce deep within the soul and the spirit of both joints and marrow. And to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

And there is no creation or creature hidden from his sight. But all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of him with whom we have to do. This is what God is saying.

Be careful that you don't fall short of disobedience. Because here's what's going to come at you. What's going to come at you is the word of God that is sharper than any two-edged sword.

And the word of God is going to get hotter. The word of God is going to get more brutal against you. And it's going to go deeper into you than you ever thought it would go into you.

You thought the worst was over? No, it's going to get much hotter. The word of God is going to go deeper to start separating all the slight little things that were soulish versus those which are spiritual. Anything that's just an intellectual idea of God or an emotional idea of God compared to that which is truly spiritual.

The word of God is going to grow deeper into us and say that's soulish. Run the way of my commandments. Obey.

Don't fall short. Don't fall short because of unbelief. Or you'll provoke God to wrath.

And that's the context of Hebrews 4 verse 12. We've quoted that verse a lot. The word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword.

But what's the context of it? Don't disobey. Don't disobey what? When God tells you to give up this filthy addiction, start there. But then it's going to get deeper and deeper.

Small religious ideas. When God tells you to give us every trace of sin. When God starts to convict us about small little thought patterns.

What are we going to do? Do we expect the word of God to just become blunt? No, it's going to become sharper. To pierce through our joints and our marrow. You know, I've heard that one of the worst pains you can have is bone pain.

That's what I've heard. It's one of the worst pains you can have. Bone cancer.

Where the cancer is inside the bone. I've heard it's one of the worst pains. What is the word of God going to do? That's what it says it's going to do.

It's going to go and drive deep into the bone and flush out the cancer that's in our marrow. Are we ready to do this? God's not going to get us to finding out those cancers that are in our marrow if we get bothered by mosquito bites. Where are we going to allow the sword to drive through the marrow? Let's start obeying.

Wherever God tells us to obey, then the sword of God will say, okay, good. You're bored with this for now, I can go deeper. I'm not going to let you off.

I'm going to go deeper and deeper and deeper. Because all of your creations, that's how I read verse 13. There is no creation of your mind.

No thinking that any thought that comes out of your mind. God says, I'm looking at that and I'm not fooled. I'm not fooled.

I saw the intentions. I saw the motives behind that thought. And I'm going to come as a sword and I'm trying to drive into it and clean out even the sin that's in the marrow of my bones.

And it's going to feel more painful than it's ever felt before. For whom? For the Christians who've been faithful to take the sin out of leprosy out of your skin. Then you go deeper within it.

And you go deeper within it and you find that the word of God gets more and more strong. Do we believe that as we get closer and closer to the holiness of God, that it's going to become easier and easier? Do we think just because we're preaching the new covenant way that the way of life now is going to become easier and easier in terms of the Holy Spirit's conviction against our sin? No, it's going to get harder. If we believe this verse is going to grow deeper and deeper into the bone marrow.

The worst kind of pains is going to come when the Holy Spirit convicts me down there. So what am I saying? Don't lose heart. Don't give up just because you feel that the fire just got a little bit hotter.

The Holy Spirit's got a long ways to go. He's trying to flush out sin in our innermost beings because that's where rivers of living water needs to flow. How is he going to get to the innermost being, the cancer in my bone marrow? I have to let the sword of God go right into it and flush it out and it's going to be painful.

You know the one person, the two people who went to the promised land was Joshua and Caleb. You know what was the worst enemy that they faced in the promised land? You think Jericho was hard? That was the first one. After that I think they went to the city called Ai and that's where they suffered defeat and they went forward.

After five years at least of fighting the giants in the promised land and winning and winning and winning. Caleb says in Numbers chapter 14, I'm not done. I have as much strength as when I left Egypt.

And the greatest enemy is still undefeated. You know where that giant was? It was in Hebron. That's where Abraham was buried.

That's where Sarah was buried. That's where his forefather was buried. And he said, I want that mountain.

That mountain. Abraham, he was my father. I want that mountain.

And the greatest giant was there. Read about that in Joshua 14. And he says, give me that mountain.

Caleb, he had entered the promised land when all of his peers didn't make it. And he started fighting giant after giant. And five years after fighting the giant, he says, I want that mountain where the greatest giants are.

He said, I want the sword of God to go all the way down to my bone marrow. I want sin to be flushed out to its uttermost. And I know it's going to be painful.

If Jericho was easy, and Ai was easy, I'm not expecting a walk in the park. This is the greatest of all the giants. It's not going to be easy, but give me that mountain.

That mountain is mine. That's where Abraham is buried. That's where the greatest of all the saints were.

I want to go that path. And Caleb had that heart that was there when he was 40 years old, that was there when he was 80 years old, that was there when he was 85 years old. Who's our example? Who allowed the sword of God to go all the way through and tested him, tested him, tempted in all points.

It's in this context that we can read verse 14 and 15. We have a high priest. We have a great high priest who passed through the heavens.

He went through every single temptation. He went through all of the trials that the second heaven and the devil and all of his devil forces went after him. And he was faithful.

Hold fast to the confession, to your confession. Hebrews 3.1 tells me what the confession is. Partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus the apostle and high priest of our confession.

And this is what our confession was. He was faithful. Genesis, Hebrews 3.2. He was faithful to the very end as the sword got deeper, deeper, deeper, deeper.

The word of God testing, tempting, testing, testing. Sorry. The word of God testing him in every area.

He was tempted in all points. We have a great high priest. He's not there to criticize us.

He went through what we went through, what we're going through. He got it much deeper than we will ever go through. Hold fast to the confession of your faith.

Don't give up as a sword is going to get deeper. Don't be dismayed. Consider it all joy.

When you face fiery trials, when the fiery sword of God starts to dig into the bone now, you think you're going to give up now? No, lean in and get in. Allow the sword to dig it out, to test you. And see, Lord, do I really want to be yours? Do I want rivers of living water out of my innermost being? Jesus was tested when his godly parents got angry with each other.

He was tested. Will I judge them? When his younger brothers teased him and tried to incite him into getting jealous or angry, or when they put the blame on him for their mistakes and he got punished, Jesus was tested. Matthew 11.

You know what happens when the godliest man you know questions you? You know who that was in Jesus' time? John the Baptist. John the Baptist sent people and said, Hey look, are you really the son of God? What blessed me was how Jesus responded. You know how Jesus responded? He said, go and tell John this.

I am the guy. I am the Messiah. But then as they were leaving, it says in Matthew 11, read it.

He told the crowd, Just imagine, the greatest man of God you know starts to question you. What's going to be your response? You know what Jesus said? John is the greatest man of God who has ever lived. Will that be your reaction? When that man, John the Baptist, just questioned you, whether you were the son of God.

He says, who did you go to see? Some great prophet? He was a voice. But I tell you, nobody born of man is greater than John the Baptist. That very man just questioned me.

Not going to judge him. Not going to be offended by him. I still believe that he is the greatest man of God who ever lived.

And it's not just Jesus. Look at Peter. You know, it says that Galatians is probably written around in the 40s or 50s.

You know what Paul said in Galatians? That Peter was a hypocrite. Paul confronted Peter for his hypocrisy in Galatians chapter 2. And Paul writes about it to the church of Galatians. Made it public.

This is not just a private rebuke. Not only did he rebuke Peter in public, he wrote about it to the church of Galatians. Who are the church in Galatians compared to Peter? But he wrote about it.

Peter was a hypocrite. 15 years later or so, Peter writes 2 Peter. And you know what Peter talks about Paul? Peter says that what Paul writes is scripture.

Imagine that. What do you mean what Paul wrote is scripture? Yeah, what Paul wrote about me, that I'm a hypocrite. That's scripture.

Not that yeah, it's probably maybe right. No, it's scripture. It's God's word that foolish men distort.

You think Peter didn't feel the pain when he heard from the church of Galatians? Hey, you know what Paul wrote about you? I got the letter right here. Let me read it to you. Let me send the pigeon.

The pigeon mail. Let me write you what he wrote about you. He said that you're a hypocrite.

You think it didn't hurt him? What did Peter do? He took it to the Lord and he allowed the sword of God to go into the bone marrow of judgment and bitterness and jealousy and getting offended. And he got delivered from it. And when he had to write 2 Peter, God said, I can use you to write scripture.

Because you know why? Because your heart is so free towards Paul. It's the only book I believe that when the scripture in the New Testament, Peter says that some other peer of his is writing scripture. He said that one of his peers is writing scripture itself, just like what Isaiah wrote.

Peter had such grace, such humility because he allowed the sword of God to go deep within him. Hold fast. And number 2, run.

Run to the throne of grace. That's what it says in Hebrews 4, verse 16. Now run.

You have a high priest. You have Jesus as your high priest. Draw near to the throne of grace.

Run the way of my commandments. I love this picture that we have here. Let us run the way of my commandments.

Do you feel there's a running going on in this picture? I see a running going on in this picture, even though you may not see it. I see the child wanting to run, to play in the forest, to check out all the beautiful things in the forest. But he's running away from that to hold his father's hands.

Let us run to hold fast to the father's hand. Let us say, Lord Jesus, let your sword go deep within me, but I'm not going to stop holding your hand. You'll enlarge my heart to know how more you love me.

As I hold your hand, I'm going to run away from all of these temptations. I'm going to run away from all these provocations of feeling bitter or angry or jealous or offended. Cleanse my heart.

Cleanse my heart completely. Let the word of God go deep within me. And it's going to get hotter.

The fire of God better get hotter. If not, we're in the wrong business. We're in the wrong religion.

The word of God is promised to clean out the sin that is in the marrow of my heart. That's how painful it has to get. But we will not despair.

Let us hold fast. And we have a great example, a forerunner. Let us run to the throne of grace.

Let us hold fast to confession. Jesus, you did it. Jesus, you were faithful.

That's my confession. Jesus, you are the Messiah. Jesus, you are the son of God.

You did it. I will hold your hand. I will come to you for mercy and for grace.

May God help us.

---

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/3FRPyslcTTE.mp4>  
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/sandeep-poonen/dont-give-up/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**